

INTRODUCTION: 'NO REGION FOR TOURISTS AND WOMEN'

As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country.

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1938)¹

The feminizing of the land is both a *poetics* of ambivalence and a *politics* of violence.

Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (1995)²

Taken out of context, Woolf's famous pronouncement seems to suggest an ahistorical misalliance between women and nations. It also suggests that a woman's desire is disassociated from the land of her birth (or her adoption). Yet at the same time, as the second epigraph conversely suggests, women and nation have been frequently conflated, from how desirable land is described (virginal), to the feminine pronoun 'she' used to describe a country, to words that evoke a familial connection (mother country). After all, as Anne McClintock argues, 'All nations depend upon powerful constructions of gender. Despite many nationalists' ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of gender *difference*.'³ Taken together, these contested viewpoints provide a starting point for discussions of transatlantic women's literature, since both reveal the impact that gender has upon the writing on/of nations.

Of course, Woolf was, in fact, protesting the way in which women were disenfranchised, rather than suggesting that women's desire didn't extend to the nation; if anything, she wished to extinguish a woman's unthinking patriotism. However, the frequency with which

Woolf's famous lines are quoted out of context suggests that her words have resonance beyond their historical moment. But what of other women writers? The twentieth century has seen a number of women's texts that engage with seeing nations from the outside, either explicitly, where writers comment on the ways in which nationality is constructed (particularly in travel books or memoirs), or implicitly, in texts where nations are seen through the actions of their inhabitants or their visitors. Of course, every travel writer implicitly or explicitly contrasts worlds. What is significant about the twentieth century, though, is the increasing freedom experienced by many (though not all) European and American women travellers, with fewer overt pressures to dress or act in particular ways;⁴ such loosening of cultural constraints might lead to a suggestion that gender becomes less important for these women travellers and writers. Yet it appears that the opposite is true; gender remains a key concern throughout the twentieth century in relation to nationhood, nationality, identity and travel, as I will explore in the chapters that follow.

It is no coincidence that women's fictional narratives of discovery use and re-use the metaphors of travel against stasis. Consider the titles of well-known feminist novels: *Fear of Flying*, *Heading West*, *Anywhere But Here*. While women have been cast as the ones left behind in male narratives of adventure and quest, assuming the role of patient Penelopes awaiting their heroes' returns rather than questing themselves, they have leading roles in women's narratives of discovery, travel and escape.

It has become a cultural commonplace that women's journeys are circular, not linear; determined, like their lives, by seasons and cycles, not destinations or goals. Such a reconceptualisation of women's 'essential nature' can either be liberating or constricting, depending on motive. For example, some aspects of women's lives are revalued as a result of feminist interrogations of psychoanalytic or cultural structures, since the focus on a circular structure validates a form of journey which does not conform to the Oedipal Complex (a pathway which equates progress and maturation with linearity), but instead exists in a pre-Oedipal state, linked to the maternal and the feminine. At the same time, however, such essentialising *places* women as firmly as have other totalising narratives. As Mary Morris reflects, 'I find it revealing that the bindings in women's corsets were called *stays*. Someone who wore stays wouldn't be going very far.'⁵ If women's clothing has historically acted as a metaphor for women's bounded behaviour, it is not surprising that, as Lindsey Tucker notes, 'to

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conceive of women and mobility in the same space has been difficult in historical as well as literary terms.⁶

To fill this gap, *Transatlantic Women's Literature* examines culturally resonant literature that imagines 'views from both sides' and analyses the imaginary, 'in-between' space of the Atlantic. The transatlantic narrative, which necessarily explores unequal encounters between people (the contact zone extending beyond its colonial roots) and the explicit construction of national identities, is a fundamental part of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature. Moreover, women's interventions into this Atlantic space are important in both historical and literary terms. In *Transatlantic Insurrections*, Paul Giles argues that 'to read national literatures in a transnational way is . . . to suggest the various forms of contingency that have entered into the formation of each naturalized inheritance.'⁷ But contingency is not related just to national literatures; it relates, too, to literature in which gender is a key component. Thus, *Transatlantic Women's Literature* emphasises 'contingency' as much as radical rupture in its exploration of a variety of (primarily) twentieth-century women's transatlantic texts. In what follows, I will offer a considered exploration of the ways in which the space of the Atlantic and women's space work together in the construction of meaning in twentieth-century transatlantic texts. I will also explore how the paradigm of Transatlantic Studies is shifting, as it becomes a more established way of viewing literary studies.

Although the transatlantic has long been an implicit part of the exploration of literature and culture(s), it has only fairly recently become subject to sustained critical analysis in its own right, particularly since the rise of postcolonial theory as a critical paradigm. In 1987, Marcus Rediker published *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, examining the role of eighteenth-century Atlantic seafarers and pirates in questions about nation-states. Six years later, Paul Gilroy published his now seminal (though controversial) text, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. In it he argues that scholars 'should take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective'.⁸ Although there are obvious critiques of his work – Fionnghuala Sweeney has recently argued that 'there is arguably little difference in delineating an Atlantic rather than a national border, when the Atlantic only serves to reprivilege western discursive practice as a thing in itself'⁹ – Gilroy's text has institutionalised the term 'Black Atlantic', and the significance of this new viewpoint cannot be underestimated. His

emphasis on texts which 'operate at other levels than those marked by national boundaries'¹⁰ implicitly suggests that to be marked by national identities is not to be confined by them.

Other notable texts include Joseph Roach's *Cities of the Dead* (1996) and his exploration of 'Circum-Atlantic Performance' in London and New Orleans; Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (2000); and the various contributions made by Paul Giles to this area, including *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* (2001), *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (2002), which also ranges widely, exploring the work of a variety of authors from Frederick Douglass to Thomas Pynchon, and *Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature* (2006). Alongside these texts are other explorations of nationhood, which inform discussions of the transatlantic, including Benedict Anderson's oft-quoted *Imagined Communities* (1983), Edward Said's *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (2000), Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (1992), Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) and James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), texts I will discuss further below, in relation to the contested terminology employed by critics of the transatlantic.

Feminist critics such as Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan argue that critics must situate their explorations of travel within a post-colonial framework, suggesting, for example, that tourism cannot be divorced from the history of imperialism.¹¹ They have urged critics to think in transnational terms and to recall the links between gender, nation and travel. Anne McClintock has similarly registered the gaps and silences of theories of travel that disregard women, particularly in the tenth chapter of *Imperial Leather*, 'No Longer in a Future Heaven', where she offers a careful rendition of male critical failings. Sara Mills explores women's travel writing and suggests that 'most travel writers portray members of other nations through a conceptual and textual grid constituted by travel books,'¹² revealing how reading impacts upon writing (and vice versa). Indeed, Heather Henderson suggests that 'the literate traveler cannot escape the literature that preconditions his [*sic*] experience of travel.'¹³ Such realisations bolster my contention, delineated throughout *Transatlantic Women's Literature*, that many transatlantic narratives reveal or concentrate on the process of *misreading*, both by their own narrators and by

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those around them, and this appears to be true whether the narrative is travel literature, memoir or indeed fiction. This sense of misreading operates on a generic level, a conceptual level, and at the level of plot, and will be explored further throughout this book.

Other texts that offer examples of the current interest in earlier transatlantic sojourns and their critical importance include the Longman anthology *Transatlantic Romanticism* (2006, ed. Newman et al.), which covers American, Canadian and British literature during the one-hundred-year period from 1767 to 1867 and Anna Brickhouse's *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (2004). Books such as *Transatlantic Modernism*, *Transatlantic Crossings* and *Transatlantic Manners* make explicit through their titles their interest in this oceanic space.¹⁴ Moreover, new journals, including *Atlantic Studies*, *Comparative American Studies* and the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, offer evidence that however it is conceptualised (socially, politically, historically, aesthetically), the transatlantic has become an area of ongoing critical investigation.¹⁵ As such, these texts lay the theoretical and historical groundwork for a work such as *Transatlantic Women's Literature*, which focuses primarily on literature from the last century.

Many texts in the larger field of Transatlantic Studies focus on colonial or early modern transatlantic encounters. Transatlantic *literary* criticism explores a number of canonical transatlantic literary relations, often focusing either on pre-twentieth-century literature or on 'modernist exiles'; what *Transatlantic Women's Literature* does is explore how the diffuse ideas circulating around such contested terms as 'the transatlantic' interact with feminist analysis of gender in later twentieth-century literature, both in the form of memoirs and travel literature and in the fictional texts that use transatlantic travel as an important motif.

Critical discussions of displacement, travel, movement and change are not new. Critics as varied as Homi Bhabha, James Clifford, Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, Graham Huggan, Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan and others have debated the roles and definitions of the exile, the expatriate, the traveller and the tourist. They have contested each other's definitions and evoked a series of critical frameworks for exploring unhousement, rehousement, movement and change. This book, therefore, builds upon and reconfigures a number of ideas in circulation. My focus is on the intersection of gender and travel, however that is defined, in relation to Transatlantic Studies, a term that also calls for additional critical intervention.

The Transatlantic Paradigm

As an evolving critical position, Transatlantic Studies needs further definition, especially since, like any other evolving subject, its proponents sometimes make exaggerated claims in relation to the new knowledge that this viewpoint offers, or of reasons why this viewpoint and not another, similar one, is best. In one sense, Transatlantic Studies is similar to American Studies, in that it is formed around a sense of geographical borders. But also like American Studies, it is not wholly explained through (or away) by such boundaries. Sheila Hones and Julia Leyda suggest that a 'critical geography' of American Studies is required, and their words, I argue, are equally applicable to Transatlantic Studies:

Because geography is as much performed as it is found or described, it also includes the routine discursive *production* of the what, the where, and the why. In other words, while American Studies conventionally takes its identity from large, apparently stable, commonsense geographical frameworks, those frameworks themselves are always at the same time actively being generated, reinscribed or reinvented through the very mundane disciplinary practices and discourses to which they appear to lend order.¹⁶

Similarly, though the Atlantic space is one that appears to be easily definable (if continually in flux), the practice of Transatlantic Studies cannot be sufficiently defined or perhaps more accurately, *fixed* by reference to this geography alone, since this space is also subject to constant reconstruction. In defining itself, Transatlantic Studies must engage with similar though not equivalent terms, such as 'circum-Atlanticism', 'globalisation', 'transnationalism' and 'worlding'.

Whilst Reingard Nethersole argues that prefixes like 'trans' represent the 'homogenizing tendencies' of globalisation,¹⁷ I prefer the prefix 'trans' because of the way that it implies two related, though not equal ideas: 'beyond' and 'across'. Thus distance and connection are simultaneously suggested, and it is this dual force that merits sustained critical attention, particularly in relation to women's texts. 'Trans' also implies 'through' and therefore offers a richer mix of ideas than, for example, circum-Atlantic studies. It is not that such texts travel *around* the Atlantic space that interests me; rather, it is the ways in which transatlantic texts offer opportunities to view disparate places within the same critical framework that is of interest. This

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requires a recognition that such critical placing involves contestation and misapprehension. In this way, *Transatlantic Studies* suggests the multiple connections between continents divided by oceanic spaces; such localities can be both linked and separate, an idea that becomes vital to any reading of women's transatlantic narratives, which routinely engage with space and reconstruction: of place and location (both figurative and real), of identity and of genre. Similarly, transatlanticity evokes a sense of connection which is not suspended above the continents connected by the Atlantic, but rather is dynamically enacted upon by both, whether that means Africa and North America, or Europe and South America, as well as the individual countries contained within these boundaries and borders.

Globalisation and transnationalism are terms that literary studies have adopted from the social sciences; they have particular resonance and application in economics, ethnography, anthropology and politics. Globalisation now almost inevitably ensures a negative viewpoint, since it is too closely linked in the critical imagination to Americanisation. As R. Radhakrishnan argues, 'globality shores up dominance and continues the anthropological fantasy of maintaining the other in intimate and yet exotic followership'.¹⁸ In this way, globality (or globalisation) reflects a repackaging of Americanisation or Westernisation rather than an egalitarian process of exchange. Radhakrishnan suggests that globalisation is seen as 'a utopian resolution to the problems of the world: a utopia sans politics, ethics, or ideological content', but this utopia is one of a 'seductive immanence, of the here-and-now' which 'bracket[s] away once and for all questions of representation and ideological perspectivism'.¹⁹ It is no surprise, then, that critics who want to explore global issues resist the term, with its connotations of either dominance or naïveté (if not, in some cases, both).

Unlike globalisation, transnationalism is sometimes associated with positive or at least less harmful interactions between countries. Like globalisation, though, there are many perspectives on what such a viewpoint might mean or be, and given its connections to *Transatlantic Studies*, it is worth spending some time reviewing critical stances on the subject. In the special issue of the *Journal of American History* entitled 'The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History', David Thelen suggests three ways of looking at transnationality:

We might imagine from afar how the phenomenon passed *over* the nation, observing the nation as a whole; or how it passed *across* the

nation, seeing how it bumped over natural and manmade [*sic*] features; or how it passed *through* the nation, transforming and being transformed.²⁰

This view of transnationality seems to see it as an inner or inward perspective on a nation, whereas for Paul Giles, transnationalism 'positions itself at a point of intersection . . . where the coercive aspects of imagined communities are turned back on themselves, reversed or mirrored, so that their covert presuppositions and ideological inflections become apparent'.²¹ This sense of reflecting back is equally important for Transatlantic Studies, which looks not just across the nation, but over the ocean as well, to transform and reform the view along the way.

In its most frequently articulated terms, transnationalism is overtly political. In her essay on *The Body Shop*, 'A World Without Boundaries', Caren Kaplan explores the ways in which the links imagined and assumed by transnationalism 'deconstruct[] the long-standing marxist cultural hegemony model by demonstrating the impossibility of finding a pure position of a site of subjectivity outside the economic and cultural dynamics that structure modernity'.²² Furthermore, she suggests that feminist interventions into transnationality offer the opportunity to 'resist the practices of modernity – i.e., nationalism, modernism, Imperialism, etc. – that have been so repressive to women'.²³ Where other critics talk approvingly of global feminism, Kaplan is clear that such a term covers over the inequalities of power, in that Euro-American feminists offer their Western perspectives as somehow global and applicable across spaces, a presumption that needs to be resisted. In *Scattered Hegemonies*, Grewal and Kaplan define transnationalism through gender:

We use the term 'transnational' to problematize a purely locational politics of global-local or center-periphery in favor of . . . the lines cutting across them. As feminists who note the absence of gender issues in all of these world-system theories, we have no choice but to challenge what we see as inadequate and inaccurate binary divisions. Transnational linkages influence every level of social existence.²⁴

Transnationality, like Transatlantic Studies, offers several opportunities for examining how nations and the ideas around nations impact upon each other, or as Grewal puts it, have 'exceeded the bounds of the nation'.²⁵ Thus, I will be using both terms in my

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discussions of women's narratives. Rather than suggesting homogeneity, transnationalism implies the flow of ideas and things across spaces, which, as James Clifford points out, 'do not point in a single historical direction'.²⁶ Transnationalism does not, however, suggest that nationhood or nationalism have gone away, especially since such flows are always uneven:

Nationalisms articulate their purportedly homogeneous times and spaces selectively, in relation to new transnational flows and cultural forms, both dominant and subaltern. The diasporic and hybrid identities produced by these movements can be both restrictive and liberating. They stitch together language, traditions, and places in coercive and creative ways, articulating embattled homelands, powers of memory, styles of aggression, in ambiguous relation to national and transnational structures.²⁷

Indeed, the very inclusion of the term 'nation' within transnationalism offers the opportunity to reflect on its ongoing critical pull, something that the term 'globalisation' covers over. I find it significant that Clifford's words above also evoke disparate *gendered* images – stitching, battles, aggression – which suggests that hybrid identities are coerced or created in gendered ways. Indeed, Clifford is clear in his acknowledgement that both nationalism and travel are different for women as opposed to men, giving examples such as US female soldiers driving cars in Saudi Arabia, or female migrant domestic workers whose unofficial duties sometimes include non-consensual sex. As a result, it is clear to Clifford that 'specific histories of freedom and danger in movement need to be articulated along gender lines'.²⁸

Alongside transnationalism lies worlding, which has been variously defined by its proponents, who trace the word back to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She, in turn, claims that her use of the word is a 'vulgarization of Martin Heidegger's idea'.²⁹ Spivak argues that worlding is a way of creating or shaping a historical narrative in imperial or colonialist terms which simultaneously deny those historical processes and make them appear natural or naturalised, so that the world can be seen only through these lenses. John Muthyala argues that

worlding the world is a kind of double movement: while it draws the world into the realm of the cognizable by establishing zones of possibility, relation, and encounter within which the world can become 'worldly,' it relegates to the margins of social existence those elements that seem to threaten this process.³⁰

Like globalisation, then, worlding has the potential effect of eliding its true processes and power differentials. Taking another perspective, Susan Gillman, Kirsten Silva Greusz and Rob Wilson suggest that worlding is a 'trans-disciplinary critical tactic' which reveals 'how modes and texts of contemporary being and worldly dwelling can become a historical process of taking care and setting limits, making the world-horizon come near and become local and informed, instantiated as an uneven/incomplete material process of world-becoming'.³¹ This version of worlding is a conscious one, which 'produces a concept of comparability attuned to the crucial spatio-temporal relation'.³² To a certain extent, then, worlding will be important to the exploration of women's transatlantic texts which either deny or explore the power bases linked to individual countries, whilst keeping in mind Woolf's sentiments above, that women's partial disenfranchisement may (perhaps even should) affect their views of all nations.

Exploring how worlding works in relation to 'America', Muthyala suggests the need to *reworld* America (which has come to stand in for the specific nation of the United States):

[R]eworlding America reconfigures spatial displacement as marking not just a redrawing of territorial boundaries and a contesting of the sometimes atavistic, sometimes creolized visions that have controlled them, but as making visible the processes by which the dissonances of the socio-cultural morphologies of 'America' are produced and managed.³³

The relevance of these overlapping concepts for an exploration of literary practice is, I hope, readily apparent. Transatlantic literature self-consciously explores how identity is created and read through images of nationhood, travel and change; furthermore, questions of insider- and outsidership are explicitly addressed, particularly in relation to desire. Mary Layoun suggests that such narratives are 'attempts to negotiate dominant narratives of nationalism in which they participate and the boundaries which those dominant narratives draw and seek to maintain. Such narrative negotiation is contestatory and acquiescent, often simultaneously'.³⁴

Clearly, transatlantic narratives do not offer a simple reading experience (hence the claim above that they rely on a series of mis-readings), nor can they be said to maintain the boundaries of inside and out, even as they may attempt to do so. Leakages and slippage are almost generically inscribed into such texts, and in this way, they have some connections to the larger question of how nations and

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nationalism is maintained. For Wai Chee Dimock, 'Induction into a nation comes at a price; it disciplines the inducted by the very logic by which it purports to be universal,'³⁵ and this is certainly one way to erect boundaries and borders, even whilst suggesting otherwise. As the narrators of these texts negotiate their relationships to new or different countries, they contrast the myths of universality with the realities (or, again, myths) of specificity, locating themselves within or against such frameworks. Giles argues that 'national identity must be brought explicitly into the frame as an object of scrutiny in itself rather than being accepted uncritically,'³⁶ and the texts under analysis here do just that, working through and around national myths and blindnesses.

Travelling Gender and the Politics of Location

In relation specifically to literature, the transatlantic exchange has been figured in multiple ways, depending on motive, agency and experience: crossing the ocean has very different meanings for the immigrant, the migrant, the exile, the slave, the traveller, the tourist and the expatriate, though of course, for some, these designations overlap. Contrasting just two of these terms – traveller and migrant – Iain Chambers suggests that the difference lies in the end point, home:

To travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility.³⁷

These ideas exert their force in the chapters that follow, which explore what home and homecoming mean for various travelling women, both those who undertake short journeys and those whose leaving-taking is more permanent.

Whilst Chambers makes a good argument for the difference between travel and migrancy, other critics suggest that such critical boundaries are themselves subject to slippage. Separating these strands may mark an impossible task, particularly since agency seems a key aspect of these various definitions. Chelva Kanaganayakam, for

example, sets out to explore and contrast 'exile' and 'expatriate' and argues for a splicing of the two terms, yet ends up suggesting that each is poised on a 'cusp', making any such distinction slippery at best.³⁸ Edward Said argues that exile is 'fundamentally a discontinuous state of being'³⁹ but that to celebrate the figure of the literary exile is to deny the reality of the experience of exile, especially for the unlettered many as opposed to the privileged few who write movingly about their experiences. Yet, as Kaplan suggests in *Questions of Travel*, Euro-American modernism valorises the lone individual traveller, whether exile or expatriate, and privileges a detached sensibility:

The conflation of exile and expatriation by modern writers and critics can be read in the way that distance has come to be privileged as the best perspective on a subject under scrutiny and in the related discourse of aesthetic gain through exile. When detachment is the precondition for creativity, then disaffection or alienation as states of mind becomes a rite of passage for the 'serious' modern artist or writer.⁴⁰

It is certainly the case that many texts in the field of Transatlantic Studies focus on modernist literary relations and canonical texts; *Transatlantic Women's Literature* engages briefly these ideas, particularly in relation to Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*, which includes the figure of the artist in a modernist framework, and Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, in which the narrator explicitly adopts a New Critical viewpoint in order to aid her understanding of her adopted country and its literature. However, my exploration of exiles and expatriates extends beyond the modernist moment and takes issue with detachment as a precondition or goal. Indeed, it is precisely affiliation that affects many women's narratives of travel and movement, given concerns over the 'proper' behaviour for wives, mothers and daughters.

Salman Rushdie conflates the terms of exile and expatriate, arguing that writers in this position, like himself,

are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation . . . almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands.⁴¹

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Rushdie's viewpoint is not detached as in the modernist narrative, but wholly engaged with place and distance, though nostalgia such as his is, indeed, a staple of transatlantic literature from whatever era. (It is intriguing, though, that he links the expatriate with the feminine image of pillars of salt, most commonly associated with Lot's wife.) Eva Hoffman suggests that questions of home and away have more acute resonance now than in the past, though it is certainly possible to argue that such a present-tense viewpoint suggests an inability to move beyond a contemporary frame. Nevertheless, her point remains valid: 'the notion of "home" may have been, in recent times, peculiarly overcharged, as the concepts of "country" and "nation" have been superimposed on each other with a seeming inevitability.'⁴²

The list of contested terms does not, however, end here. Even the terms 'tourist' and 'traveller' resist final definition and have been subject to sustained scrutiny. In 1976, Dean MacCannell made the bold claim, 'we are all tourists' in his groundbreaking work, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*.⁴³ Thirteen years later, in discussing the changes he could have made to the text for the 1989 edition, MacCannell noted the rise in feminist criticism and the ways in which this would have had an impact on the language choices he would have made had he chosen to rewrite (rather than just reissue) the text. Yet at the same time, he dismissed the importance of such refashioning: he considered the 'tourist' 'the most frivolous of these putatively genderless but masculine figures [like the president or the surgeon], so beside the point of gender politics that I doubt feminists would think it worthwhile to attack him'.⁴⁴ Despite his gender blindness here, which both acknowledges but then dismisses the importance of inclusivity, his discussion of the normative male tourist still offers important insights into how tourists are defined and perceived.⁴⁵ MacCannell argues against the way in which the tourist is dismissed by critics as seeking only the inauthentic experience, yet this perception remains entrenched in some critics' minds. For Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczowska, for example, travel is about transformation, whereas tourism focuses only on 'a circular confirmation of self-identity'.⁴⁶

Yet to claim the tourist is an inferior version of the traveller, as Paul Fussell does repeatedly in *Abroad* (1980), for example, invites other critics to argue that such designations are faulty at best and rest on a nostalgic imperialism; indeed, Kaplan goes so far as to link the tourist and the exile in the same imagined space, suggesting that each attempts to construct authenticity as 'elsewhere'.⁴⁷ Conversely, Curtis

and Pajaczkowska *contrast* the tourist and the exile (who is also linked to the traveller), suggesting that the difference between them lies in their relationship to time and home.⁴⁸ In his seminal text, *The Tourist Gaze*, John Urry argues that the tourist experience is marked by the division between the ordinary and the extraordinary, and he further argues that 'tourists are semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from various discourses of travel and tourism,'⁴⁹ thus giving them more credit than other critics do regarding motivation and ability.

Perhaps the difficulty in consolidating the competing definitions around which critics explore transatlantic issues lies in what Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake call the 'transnational imaginary,' or the

as-yet-unfigured horizon of contemporary cultural production by which national spaces/identities of political allegiance and economic regulation are being undone and imagined communities of modernity are being reshaped at the macropolitical (global) and micropolitical (cultural) levels of everyday existence.⁵⁰

The sense that the transatlantic offers *unfinished*, continuously evolving cultural encounters is paramount for our understanding of the journey; there is no *one kind* of transatlantic travel, and the basis on which the individual travels – whether it is compulsory or chosen, for leisure or immigration – impacts directly on the experience.

It is not my task in this book, therefore, to argue that there are stable definitions of exile, expatriate, refugee or immigrant; as I have shown, critics who attempt such definitions are subject to further readings of their work which disprove their set agendas (as is, for example, Said; Kaplan suggests that despite his demarcation of exile and refugee, he ends up collapsing such distinctions or moving away from his own insights, reinforcing the modernist – and, in Kaplan's eyes, therefore 'bad' – view of the solitary exile). Yet it is patently clear that women writers invoke such definitions and self-definitions, and it is on this basis that I will use the terms outlined above. Nella Larsen's Helga Crane is a happy expatriate, until she discovers that expatriation, in her case, becomes synonymous with exoticism. Bharati Mukherjee constructs an illegal immigrant who wishes for assimilation and exoticisation in equal measures, even if such protean desires ensure critical disapproval. Jenny Diski takes the stance of an anti-tourist in her memoir and travel narratives. Eva Hoffman is in

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exile in Canada (indeed, the second part of her book insists this is the case, taking 'Exile' as its title). Anne Tyler constructs American characters who define themselves as the norm against the encroaching foreignness of others, or who attempt not to 'see' the foreign in the assumption that to note difference is to fall prey to its negative seductiveness; and Isabel Allende offers up a cross-dressing migrancy with no logical endpoint. For all of these writers, the gendered traveller marks a point of enquiry, a space for further discussion, and an opportunity to explore how she defines herself, or is defined.

Since the 1990s, discourses of travel have become more frequently articulated, and the intersections of gender, race and class with mobility have become more pronounced, with critics exploring what it means to move in space, to travel in ways that reconfigure identity relations and power. As mentioned above, McClintock, Grewal and Kaplan read against the grain of male theorists, particularly noting their inattention to gender. In turn, many male critics have now taken up the challenge that gender studies present; in his book *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, for example, James Clifford conscientiously notes the importance of gender in relation to travel narratives, and Said is careful to include both male and female pronouns in his later work on travel and exile. While Ulf Hannerz rather resolutely refers to the generic 'he' throughout *Transnational Connections*, particularly in relation to the figure of 'the cosmopolitan', his elision of the female is unusual in contemporary texts.

This is not to suggest, however, that the battles Kaplan and other feminist critics have been waging on gender blindness have been entirely won (indeed, in the case study on Isabella Bird below, we shall see how gender awareness gets turned back on itself by critics who wish to ignore gender politics). Specifically in relation to women's exploration of travel and gender, issues to do with the politics of location take on varied and deep resonance, and the whole question of the gendering of the nation – and the traveller – remain central to understanding such texts.

The term 'politics of location' has been variously used since the 1980s, and, as Kaplan argues, is 'a particularly North American feminist articulation of difference' as well as 'a method of interrogating and deconstructing the position, identity, and privilege of whiteness'.⁵¹ In *Questions of Travel*, Kaplan recapitulates an argument about the politics of location which was also published in her co-edited collection, *Scattered Hegemonies*. Extending her work in her monograph,

Kaplan also changes terminology. Instead of the 'Western' women of the earlier texts, such women become 'Euro-American' in *Questions of Travel*, more closely signalling their location, perhaps. The transition from Western (which implicitly signals the 'otherness' of the East) indicates Kaplan's own growing sense of the importance of particularity and a resistance to suspect uses of such terms. Situating women travellers within the boundaries or frameworks that mark their identification politics is key to understanding both what they see when they are abroad and how they are received and viewed themselves. Although, as Clifford suggests, no one is unalterably and forever 'fixed' by identity, at the same time, individuals cannot ignore or entirely leave aside the 'specific structures of race and culture, class and caste, gender and sexuality, environment and history'⁵² that shape them. Clifford's argument, closely linked to his exploration of identity, is that location 'is an itinerary rather than a bounded site – a series of encounters and translations'.⁵³ In this sense, then, it equates somewhat with discussions of Transatlantic Studies itself.

For Kaplan, an awareness of the politics of location can help us to understand why, for example, the ability to travel has been seen as a sign of 'liberation' (primarily for white, class privileged women) as well as why the idea of a 'global sisterhood' becomes utterly untenable in such a dynamic.⁵⁴ Whilst travel as liberation is a powerful symbol, and one used by many of the women writers whose work is being analysed here, one needs to treat its symbolism cautiously, noting what this symbolism elides as well as what it reproduces. Liberation for whom and at what cost are perhaps the questions of travel that need the most attention. How one travels (and performs one's gender whilst doing so) become other issues of note. For if women no longer wear stays, there is certainly, to some extent, still a focus on their appearance as travellers. Inderpal Grewal makes a convincing argument when she suggests that the nineteenth-century English abhorrence of the veil, or of harems, was a way of deflecting attention away from the real inequalities felt by English women at home, suggesting similarities rather than differences across cultures; this reaction against what appears to be foreign (and elevation of one's own cultural practices as not only the norm, but that which should be aspired to and admired) remains a fairly consistent part of twentieth-century transatlantic texts as well, though at the same time, there is less apparent certainty in these positions.

Hannerz rightfully argues that 'there were always interactions, and a diffusion of ideas, habits, and things, even if at times we have

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been habituated to theories of culture and society which have not emphasized such truths.⁵⁵ Now that cultural theories do emphasise such points, as this exploration of transnationalism and Transatlantic Studies makes clear, it is somewhat easier to see these effects in a range of texts. In order to set the discussion of twentieth-century women's travelling narratives in context, and to explore further the idea of abhorrence and cultural contrasts, I turn now to a well-known nineteenth-century text, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, to offer some contrasts but also continuities with the twentieth-century texts that follow.

'No Region for Tourists and Women': Isabella Bird's Travel and Travail

This case study analyses how Isabella Bird's nineteenth-century collection of letters home, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), offers a complex, transatlantic exploration of gender.⁵⁶ The text depicts an idealised freedom from constraint, but it also provides evidence of the ways in which the gendered self cannot be fully or easily abandoned. For example, in her sojourn across the Rockies, Bird rides her horse as a man would, but reverts to side-saddle when she encounters settlements, despite finding such a riding position painful. She discovers that her hosts often want her help with (feminine) chores, and learns to make herself 'agreeable', yet manages to mistake, in one instance, cayenne pepper for cinnamon, thus (intentionally?) rendering her cake inedible. Moreover, her more generalised freedom from constraint – her trying out of various gender positions – is still circumscribed by her culture and its mores. In discussions of a man called Mountain Jim, who alternately arouses and repulses her, she maintains a distanced voice of piety and Christian charity, but there is a long gap in the text surrounding time spent in his company, alone.

However, Bird also perpetuates the prejudices of her times. For example, her discussions of the Native American population are bigoted, disrupting any sort of canonisation of the female hero that a naïve reader might wish to set up. As Anne McClintock reminds us, white women 'were not hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting',⁵⁷ and Bird's discussion (and hierarchy) of various races and nationalities reveals this clearly. In these ways and others, Bird is unable to step fully out of her own cultural inheritance even while exploring a different set of identities whilst

abroad (and this recognition is also important for each of the other texts discussed throughout). Rockwell Gray contends that to travel is 'to move through differing geographical and cultural realms of multi-determined meaning', whereas Karen Lawrence argues that 'home is, of course, never totally left behind.'⁵⁸ These opposing (but connected) viewpoints are both crucial for a discussion of this text.

Isabella Bird makes a useful first case study to consider, not because I want to set her up as distinctive or iconic, but because in many respects she is representative of a particular kind of lady traveller of the nineteenth century; a British woman who, assured of her class, ethnic and national superiority, nevertheless finds that travel affords her freedom from the very things that make her (in her eyes and others) superior. Moreover, she cannot fully articulate this freedom, which nevertheless leaks out of her genteel narrative of crossing the Rocky Mountains, particularly in relation to the fact that her claims of frailty alternate with extensive articulations of feats of strength. If at one point, she claims that a mountaineering feat is too much for her – 'had I known that the ascent was a real mountaineering feat I should not have felt the slightest ambition to perform it. As it is, I am only humiliated by my success, for "Jim" dragged me up, like a bale of goods, by sheer force of muscle' (88) – at other points her skills are much in evidence. Indeed, she brags that she drives cattle as well as the men do, so much so that she is called a '“good cattleman”' in Estes Park (116). In addition, she details extensive injuries from a fall almost as if they are a badge of honour:

The flesh of my arm looks crushed into a jelly, but cold-water dressings will soon bring it right; and a cut on my back bled profusely; and the bleeding, the many bruises and general shake, have made me feel weak, but circumstances do not admit of 'making a fuss,' and I really think that the rents in my riding-dress will prove the most important part of the accident. (62)

Here, if Bird's female *body* is temporarily disabled, it is her costume that is most problematic, for Bird has a clear need to maintain respectability, even as she is fascinated by those, such as Mountain Jim, who give up such claims. Indeed, the regularity with which Bird declaims on costume is surely not accidental, whether she is comparing herself to San Francisco woman 'much "got up" in paint, emerald green velvet, Brussels lace, and diamonds' next to whom Bird 'sustained the reputation which our countrywomen bear in America by

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looking a “perfect guy”’ (24), or whether she is identifying the ways in which her dress has been affected by her travels. Indeed, subsequent editions of her book included a drawing of her Hawaiian riding dress, precisely to ‘visually demonstrate the wholly feminine nature of the costume in question’.⁵⁹ Evelyn Bach suggests that Bird’s freedom to travel is ‘facilitated by her care to maintain every appearance of feminine propriety’.⁶⁰

As Clifford argues, ‘[W]omen travelers were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normative male definitions and experiences.’⁶¹ Thus, whilst her tales of adventure, risk and making-do rival those of her male counterparts, one is always made aware of her gender and her sex, not least by Bird herself. Indeed, compressing class and gender in one instance, Bird reveals that she has been asked to stay on in her lodgings in the mountains over the winter when the other women (less able, less robust) move away:

Evans offers me six dollars a week if I will stay into the winter and do the cooking after Mrs. Edwards leaves! I think I should like playing at being a ‘hired girl’ if it were not for the bread-making! But it would suit me better to ride after cattle. The men don’t like ‘baching,’ as it is called in the wilds – *i.e.* ‘doing for themselves.’ They washed and ironed their clothes yesterday, and there was an incongruity about the last performance. I really think (though for the fifteenth time) that I shall leave tomorrow. (120)

Leave, of course, she does, because part of her (largely unacknowledged) reason for travel is to move outside this very domesticity, and to ensure that her gender does not equate with the jobs she is required to do. Instead, she heads out into nature, observes and catalogues sights and sites, and stakes her own claims to space. Indeed, she even suggests that her favourite area, Estes Park, belongs to her:

It is unsurveyed, ‘no man’s land,’ and mine by right of love, appropriation, and appreciation; by the seizure of its peerless sunrises and sunsets, its glorious afterglow, its blazing noons, its hurricanes sharp and furious, its wild auroras, its glories of mountain and forest, of canyon, lake, and river, and the stereotyping them all in my memory. (95–7)

Unlike a typical travel writer, though, Bird claims she would not tell others how to follow her; she would keep the space pristine and

undisturbed, yet she does not have this in her power. By the time her book is published, others have already seduced tourists to the area.

Mills suggests that it is the very 'factual' nature of women's travelling narratives that makes them 'potentially extremely subversive', especially when set alongside the literature of the time which represented women as frail.⁶² Yet Mills also notes that this potential for subversion is easily undermined by the fact that such characters were seen as exceptional, or eccentric – not like other women. Certainly Isabella Bird's freedom to travel depends upon the confinement of others (including, in a sense, her female audience), and on their lower rank and status. She strategically becomes in this dynamic an *exceptional* woman; as indeed she was. She was a founding member of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and refused to speak to the British Geographical Society until they made her a member.⁶³ She stands outside her gender, or both within and outside it; constantly checking how she is assessed, and performing above expectation at crucial moments, whilst strategically underperforming at others.

Mills rightly notes that 'it is not necessary to read travel writing as expressing the truth of the author's life, but rather, it is the result of a configuration of discursive structures with which the author negotiates.'⁶⁴ These negotiations are apparent from the very first lines of the book. Bird, disclaiming any intention of publishing her work, is nevertheless persuaded first to publish her letters home in *Leisure Hour* 'at the request of its editor' (11). Thus, the volume that becomes *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* goes through a series of iterations before it becomes this 'factual' account, and as noted above, there are many elements missing from Bird's narrative.

What is very apparent in her text, though, is a constant assessment of transatlantic travel, and of transatlantic travellers themselves (including herself). She pronounces easily on other nationalities, finding the Irish unlikeable, for example, and she is both drawn to and repulsed by her own countrymen. Proclaiming definitively that 'an American is nationally assumptive, an Englishman personally so' (154), Bird limns an encounter with a fellow Briton, who ignores her until he recognises their shared nationality, at which point he proclaims 'a profound contempt for everything American' (154–5), as if assuming she will share his feelings. She also mentions, somewhat mockingly, 'The Earl', a man whose 'insular peculiarities' occasioned his moniker (103).

In her guise as a travelling lady, she is often mistaken for a Dane or a Swede, and therefore she hears quite outspoken criticism of her

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countrymen and women. The English, she is told, are greedy and travel ‘“only to gratify their palates”’ (144); at another point, she is party to a conversation where her hosts, the Chalmerses, suggest that their English neighbours, the Hugheses, are repugnant and unrefined, so much so that Mrs Chalmers claims, ‘“Those English talked just like savages, I couldn’t understand a word they said”’ (51). Displaced and unaccustomed to the hardships of the West, the Hugheses stand in for the displaced original inhabitants of the region, whose customs and mores are unreadable and whose language impedes rather than aids meaning. Of course, Bird’s inclusion of this vignette is not without an ulterior motive; she finds the Chalmerses repugnant and her depiction of them is far from flattering. To Bird, the Hugheses’ home is an ‘oasis’ where she can converse with an ‘educated lady’ for a change, something that she values highly (51). To a certain extent, then, Bird divides people by status as much as by nationality.

Yet it is the very fact of status that also nonplusses her. She comments on the ‘respectful courtesy to women’ in the West (25) and is amazed that the men whom she encounters do not try to take advantage of the fact that she travels alone. Moreover, whereas she acknowledges a general lawlessness – or, ‘manifest indifference to the higher obligations of the law’ (67) – she contrasts this with the fact that property is less at risk in the Wild West than in Great Britain. Finally, though, Bird acknowledges, as is expected of her, that it is women’s calming influence that will make the American West a more civilised place. If she fails a little in her own duty in this area (despite her attempts to reform Mountain Jim, he dies the desperado that he is, unrepentant and unforgiven), she nevertheless reinforces the message that a woman exerts the most power when she is quiet and refined, not when she exercises ‘noisy self-assertion, masculinity, or fastness’ (208). Having driven cattle, ridden on her own through the mountains, and conquered areas unfit for ‘women and tourists’ (53), Bird nevertheless conforms to her expected denouement, quoting Oliver Goldsmith’s ‘The Traveler’ on one’s heart remaining with one’s own people, and William Cowper’s famous line ‘England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!’ (199) in the penultimate letter of the book. Bird herself suggests that ‘surely one advantage of travelling is that, while it removes much prejudice against foreigners and their customs, it intensifies tenfold one’s appreciation of the good at home, and, above all, of the quietness and purity of English domestic life’ (199). As such, Bird returns to England – only, of course, to leave it once again, for other travels, on other continents.

In January 1905, the *Journal of the Royal African Society* ran an obituary of Mrs J. F. Bishop – Isabella Bird – who had died in October 1904. The journal comments that the society had ‘lost a generous supporter and member’ in the person of Mrs Bishop, whose ‘travels are too well known to need more than a brief recapitulation’. Finally, the paragraph-long obituary notes, ‘She was meditating an extensive exploration of North Africa before her health (never very robust) gave way a year ago.’⁶⁵ Thus this intrepid explorer, who is nevertheless far from ‘robust’, is named as a married (though in fact widowed) woman rather than called by the name she is known to us today, and her frailty, so important for her gender, remains intact despite her obvious health whilst abroad.

Perhaps even more fascinatingly, she became the figure of academic debate in the early 1990s in the pages of the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. In an article entitled ‘Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography’, Mona Domosh argues for a reconsideration of Victorian women travellers and their contributions to science. In particular, she contends that

the ‘pre-scientific’ experiences of women travellers at the turn of the century, therefore, are in one sense more relevant today for what they can tell us about the role of the outsider and the methods of observation than for any information about ‘new’ places.⁶⁶

She further suggests that a feminist historiography could therefore be not only appropriate, but fundamental to current understandings of their role. Suggesting that the experience of women like Isabella Bird ‘lay outside the realm of acceptable discourse’, Domosh seeks to claim this experience and rename it.⁶⁷

Such an intellectual project clearly has its detractors, including David R. Stoddart, who wrote a stinging reply, which, if anything, confirms Domosh’s view of critical disregard: ‘I am not aware, for example, that Isabella Bird ever made a measurement, a map or a collection, or indeed ever wrote other than impressionistically about the areas she visited.’⁶⁸ Moreover, Stoddart suggests that women like Bird do not need special consideration: ‘No feminist historiography is required to analyse their contributions: they looked after themselves, their careers and their scholarship perfectly well without such assistance.’⁶⁹ If Bird was ‘never robust’ in life, she seems fairly sturdy – if Stoddart is to be believed – in death. Yet what makes her fascinating is that in both cases, her gender is the most important issue of

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concern. She is either a lady who did no useful scientific work (what lady does?), and can therefore be dismissed, or she was a female pioneer whose successes rivalled those of men and is therefore worthy of further exploration herself. Certainly Bird herself exhibited some ambivalence towards her role, a fact that is not uncommon for nineteenth-century women travel writers, who could not shake off a consideration of their gender.⁷⁰

Nor, it seems, can twentieth-century women travellers, both fictional and real, fully step outside consideration of their gender (nor do they uniformly want to). In what follows, I will explore how gender and travel interact across the transatlantic space that offers connections and distances in equal measures. For all travellers, according to Chambers:

To come from elsewhere, from 'there' and not 'here', and hence to be simultaneously 'inside' and 'outside' the situation at hand, is to live at the intersections of histories and memories, experiencing both their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into new, more extensive, arrangements along emerging routes.⁷¹

Yet for women, the paradox of what such inside and outside boundaries suggest is rarely resolved. Victorian women travellers were both inside and outside the colonial identifications of their male counterparts, with the result that 'the clash of feminine and colonial discourses construct texts which are at one and the same time presenting a self which transgresses and which conforms both to patriarchal and imperial discourses.'⁷² If this dilemma is clearly played out for earlier women writers, it is less visible in the latter part of the twentieth century, yet questions over propriety, status and privilege remain key to understanding the texts that transatlantic women produce.

Chambers suggests that living abroad entails '*a conversation in which different identities are recognised, exchanged and mixed, but do not vanish*',⁷³ and this recognition of multiple, irresolvable identity performances is at the heart of women's transatlantic travel. For women writers, the transatlantic encounter almost insistently marks either a rejection or a continuation of 'home' and their texts engage with the concepts of movement and stasis in deceptively simple or overtly complex ways. Literary tourists and travellers seek or resist identification with the new cultures that they encounter. However, this phenomenon is more complex than a simple mapping of masculinity and femininity, ethnicity or nationality onto the transatlantic

space, and an interrogation of all these concepts is central to this book.

Women writers have created a body of fictional and non-fictional narratives that appear to illuminate or mythologise aspects of national character, as well as to problematise the politics of tourism and travel in their negotiations of gendered identity. The texts analysed here project and define a highly unstable cultural geography, as they place their narrators in the position of tourists and travellers encountering the familiar in the 'foreign' or vice versa. It is no surprise that travel texts perform the dual role of illumination and fictionalisation, given that tourists and travellers themselves participate in a similar process of construction – of identity and nationality, self and other.

Transatlantic Women's Literature is divided into three parts, each with its own short introduction, followed by two closely-read case studies that explore the transatlantic narrative in depth. It analyses both fictional and factual narratives, for as Karen Lawrence argues, 'Travel writing reveals a set of alternative myths or models for women's place in society.'⁷⁴ The juxtaposition of fiction and fact allows for an interrogation into the myriad ways in which female movement is depicted, defined and negotiated.

In Part One, I explore the construction of racial identities across the transatlantic space and the lure of the exotic 'other'. After a short introduction in which I show how this exotic other is problematised through reference to two late twentieth-century texts – Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* (1983), which imagines an idealised transatlantic ethnic heritage that a middle class African-American learns to access through the cultural memory of chant and dance, and Jamaica Kincaid's scathing essay attacking Caribbean tourism, *A Small Place* (1988) – I go on to offer sustained analysis of Nella Larsen's early twentieth-century novella *Quicksand* (1928) and Bharati Mukherjee's critically contested late twentieth-century novel *Jasmine* (1989). In *Quicksand*, the Danish-African-American Helga Crane attempts to leave questions of race and allegiance behind in moving to her (white) mother's native land, but finds that her black skin is accentuated and capitalised upon by her relatives for social gain. Helga is visibly othered by those she is closest to, and questions over who has the power to define are paramount. In *Jasmine* Mukherjee offers an Indian woman narrator who, arriving in the US in order to commit *sati*, almost accidentally embarks upon a quixotic adventure instead. This adventure relies on familiar American myths

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and images, but Mukherjee alters them strategically to acknowledge the impact of gender and ethnicity on transatlantic travel. As a result, Jasmine's encounters with 'America' – both mythic and real – affect her negotiations of her transatlantic, gendered identity. In both texts, an exploration of the mythic appeal of the exotic is closely linked to gender and performance.

In Part Two, I explore the role of identity selection and national performance in memoirs of travel. To travel is to invent not only the destination, but also the traveller, as identity becomes a performance which tailors itself to whatever audience it encounters. Eva Hoffman 'performs' her complicated national allegiances in her move from Poland to North America in her first memoir, *Lost in Translation* (1989) as well as subsequent texts, whereas Jenny Diski 'performs' the role of the anti-tourist in her travel books, *Skating to Antarctica* (1997) and *Stranger on a Train: Daydreaming and Smoking around America with Interruptions* (2002). What is clear for both texts, though, as well as other travel memoirs, is that 'shifts of identity are highly complex, sometimes unstable, and often have reversible elements built into them.'⁷⁵

In Part Three, I return to fiction, examining the pull of home and the reinvention of foreignness both within and outside the family, first in relation to Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist* (1985) and *Digging to America* (2006), and then in relation to Isabel Allende's *Daughter of Fortune* (1999). According to Charles Vandersee, 'America is a site where people appear by accident and meet by accident rather than by ancestry and assignment.'⁷⁶ The texts in this section explore the accidental nature of foreignness. Tyler's families have permeable boundaries that admit outsiders who do not belong to genetic families but whose presence alters such families in dynamic and unstable ways, and she articulates overtly the concerns over foreignness in both texts. Isabel Allende's *Daughter of Fortune* extends the analysis of transatlantic (as well as transpacific) encounters as both restricting and transformative. In particular, the novel explores how racial and gender identities become blurred in the process of crossing the ocean. Like Mukherjee's text above, *Daughter of Fortune* acknowledges the mythic practices of Americanness, and reconfigures the ocean as the origin of a fairytale adventure for a female picaresque, complete with identity shifts, cross dressing and the sloughing off of inherited culture.

Karen Lawrence maintains that 'the trope of travel – whether in its incarnations as exile or adventure, tourism or exploration – provides

a particularly fertile imaginative field for narrative representations of women's historical and personal agency.⁷⁷ It is precisely for this reason that women's narratives of transatlantic travel are such rich sources for explorations of identity and representation. Fictional travel narratives, like their 'real' counterparts, provide accounts of *difference* by exploring the politics of location while simultaneously examining localities. As cultural outsiders, these fictional travellers comment upon the society from which they spring and the societies to which they now belong.

What all these fictional travel narratives have in common is a sense that gender is a condition which impinges upon – even determines – the travel experience. Each displays a postmodern sensibility, where identity is a performance which is fluid, not fixed. This is, of course, intimately bound up in travel itself. As Trinh T. Minh-ha suggests, 'If travelling perpetuates a discontinuous state of being, it also satisfies, despite the existential difficulties it entails, one's insatiable need for detours and displacements in postmodern culture.'⁷⁸ The conclusion argues that these texts contribute to the evolving definitions of transatlantic literature, with important implications for the future development of Transatlantic Studies as a theorised space.

NOTES

1. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), p. 166.
2. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Routledge: New York, 1995), p. 28, italics in original.
3. Ibid. p. 353, italics in original.
4. Of course, for some women, religious and cultural regulations and mores require or enforce restrictions on dress, and when visiting some sacred sites, both men and women are required to cover up. Nonetheless, it is clear that for many women, there is greater freedom in relation to appearance now than there has been in the immediate past.
5. Mary Morris, 'Women and Journeys: Inner and Outer', in Michael Kowalewski (ed.), *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), p. 25, italics in original.
6. Lindsey Tucker, *Textual Escap(e)ades: Mobility, Maternity, and Textuality in Contemporary Fiction by Women* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), p. 1.

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7. Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), p. 1.
8. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 15.
9. Fionnghuala Sweeney, 'The Black Atlantic, American Studies and the Politics of the Postcolonial', *Comparative American Studies* 4 (2) (2006): 125.
10. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, p. 218.
11. See, in particular, *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*; *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*; and *Transnational America: Feminisms, Disaporas, Neoliberalisms*.
12. Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 73. Originally published in 1991.
13. Heather Henderson, 'The Travel Writer and the Text: "My Giant Goes with Me Wherever I Go,"' in Michael Kowalewski (ed.), *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), p. 239.
14. Full bibliographic details for these texts are as follows: Martin Halliwell, *Transatlantic Modernism: Moral Dilemmas in Modern Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005); Sarah Street, *Transatlantic Crossings: British Feature Films in the United States* (London: Continuum, 2002); and Christopher Mulvey, *Transatlantic Manners: Social Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Travel Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
15. See also the edited collections, Will Kaufman and Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson (eds), *Transatlantic Studies* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), and Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson and Will Kaufman (eds), *New Perspectives in Transatlantic Studies* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), the ABC-Clio *Transatlantic Relations* encyclopaedia series, as well as academic organisations and associations, such as the Maastricht Center for Transatlantic Studies (www.cmsu.edu/mcts) and the STAR project on Scotland's Transatlantic Relations at Edinburgh (www.star.ac.uk). The Duke University project, 'Oceans Connect: Maritime Perspectives in and Beyond the Classroom', which ran from 1997 until 2002 and was supported by the Ford Foundation, is another example of such a cross-disciplinary project, and though it ranged beyond the transatlantic space, and therefore is partially outside of boundaries of my own critique, it offered a challenge to traditional conceptions of area studies paradigms.

28] *Transatlantic Women's Literature*

16. Sheila Hones and Julia Leyda, 'Towards a Critical Geography of American Studies', *Comparative American Studies* 2 (2) (2004): 186, italics in original.
17. Reingard Nethersole, 'Models of Globalization', *PMLA* 116 (3) (2001): 643.
18. R. Radhakrishnan, 'Globalization, Desire, and the Politics of Representation', *Comparative Literature* 53 (4) (2001): 318.
19. Ibid. p. 324.
20. David Thelen, 'The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History', *The Journal of American History* 86 (3) (1999): 968, italics in original.
21. Giles, *Virtual Americas*, p. 17.
22. Caren Kaplan, '"A World Without Boundaries:" The Body Shop's Trans/National Geographics', *Social Text* 43 (1995): 48.
23. Ibid.
24. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (eds), *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 11.
25. Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Disaporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 8.
26. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 9. Originally published in 1997.
27. Ibid. p. 10.
28. Ibid. p. 6.
29. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 260 n. 1.
30. John Muthyala, *Reworlding America: Myth, History, and Narrative* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), p. 3.
31. Susan Gillman, Kirsten Silva Greusz and Rob Wilson, 'Worlding American Studies', *Comparative American Studies* 2 (3) (2004): 262.
32. Ibid.
33. Muthyala, *Reworlding*, p. 15.
34. Mary Layoun, 'The Female Body and "Transnational" Reproduction; or, Rape by Any Other Name?', in Grewal and Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 65.
35. Wai Chee Dimock, 'Scales of Aggregation: Prenational, Subnational, Transnational', *American Literary History* 18 (2) (2006): 220.
36. Giles, *Virtual Americas*, p. 256.
37. Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 5.
38. Chelva Kanaganayakam, 'Exiles and Expatriates', in Bruce King (ed.), *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 201-13.

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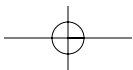
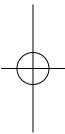
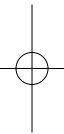
39. Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta, 2000), p. 177.
40. Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 36.
41. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* (London: Granta, 1992), p. 10.
42. Eva Hoffman, 'The New Nomads', in André Aciman (ed.), *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss* (New York: The New Press, 1999a), p. 58.
43. Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), p. 191. Originally published in 1976. In an epilogue to the 1999 edition, which marked the second printing of the second edition, MacCannell argued that this claim still stood, as long as it was augmented by the understanding that sometimes, we take on the mantle of tour guide, too.
44. MacCannell, *Tourist*, p. xxiv.
45. It is also true, as Kaplan points out, the tourist

is not a postmodern cosmopolitan subject who articulates hybridity for anxious moderns but a specifically Euro-American construct who marks shifting peripheries through travel in a world of structured economic asymmetries. Thus we cannot transform the tourist into the primary figure of our era because the tourist is as time bound and historically constructed as any other trope and cannot be made to stand for what it does not signify.' (Kaplan, *Questions*, p. 63)

46. MacCannell, *Tourist*, p. 94; Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska, '“Getting There”: Travel, Time and Narrative', in George Robertson et al. (eds), *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 206.
47. Kaplan, *Questions*, p. 64.
48. Curtis and Pajaczkowska, '“Getting There”', pp. 202–3.
49. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 12–13. Originally published in 1990.
50. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, 'Introduction: Tracking the Global/Local', in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 6, italics in original.
51. Kaplan, *Questions*, p. 163.
52. Clifford, *Routes*, p. 12.
53. Ibid. p. 11.
54. Kaplan, 'World', p. 47.
55. Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 18.

56. Isabella Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (London: Penguin, 1997). Originally published in 1873, the text that Penguin uses is the 1879 version. All references to this text will be cited parenthetically.
57. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 6.
58. Rockwell Gray, 'Travel', in Kowalewski, *Temperamental Journeys*, pp. 36–7; Karen Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 19.
59. Evelyn Bach, 'A Traveller in Skirts: Quest and Conquest in the Travel Narratives of Isabella Bird', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 22 (3–4) (1995): 590.
60. Ibid.
61. Clifford, *Routes*, p. 32.
62. Mills, *Discourses*, p. 119.
63. Morag Bell and Cheryl McEwan, 'The Admission of Women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society, 1892–1914; the Controversy and the Outcome', *The Geographical Journal* 162 (3) (1996): 296–7.
64. Mills, *Discourses*, p. 9.
65. 'Obituary Note', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 4 (14) (1905): 261.
66. Mona Domosh, 'Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (1) (1991): 99.
67. Ibid. p. 100.
68. David R. Stoddart, 'Do We Need a Feminist Historiography of Geography, And If We Do, What Should It Be?', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (4) (1991): 484.
69. Ibid. p. 485.
70. Mills, *Discourses*, p. 103.
71. Chambers, *Migrancy*, p. 6.
72. Mills, *Discourses*, p. 106.
73. Chambers, *Migrancy*, p. 18, italics in original.
74. Lawrence, *Penelope*, p. xi.
75. Paul White, 'Geography, Literature and Migration', in Russell King et al. (eds), *Writing across Worlds: Literature and Migration* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 3.
76. Charles Vandersee, 'Intertextual, International, Industrial Strength', *American Literary History* 6 (3) (1994): 419.
77. Lawrence, *Penelope*, p. 20.
78. Trinh T. Minh-ha, 'Other Than Myself/My Other Self', in Robertson et al., p. 21.

PART 1
THE EXOTICISED OTHER



INTRODUCTION

The construction of racial and ethnic identities across the transatlantic space almost inevitably leads to an investigation into the lure of the exotic 'other'. The enforced othering of those from different social, ethnic and religious backgrounds is a well-known phenomenon, one that a range of critics has ably examined, from Edward Said's exploration of Orientalism to Mary Louise Pratt's analysis of the 'contact zone' as well as other postcolonial examinations of identity and identity makers. Indeed, European and American travel literature, particularly from the nineteenth century, frequently rested on a notion of otherness against which the authors measured themselves and 'home'. Yet the concept of home is not entirely without its difficulties. Alasdair Pettinger's important anthology, *Always Elsewhere: Travels of the Black Atlantic*, explores how diasporic writers negotiate a sense of shifting identity, acknowledging that for these writers,

it is not always clear where 'home' is. And for that reason it is the subject of a much wider range of emotions – nostalgia, indifference, exasperation, perplexity, embarrassment. In any case, the expected contrast between the familiarity of home and the strangeness of abroad that underpins so much travel literature is often absent.¹

Moreover, many writers of the Black Atlantic encounter racist assumptions about who can travel, and why. Inderpal Grewal thus argues that the framework of travel as a 'universal form of mobility' is seriously flawed; it is, rather, a Eurocentric construction that

aestheticises travel as choice and denies its other manifestations, such as slavery, deportation, im/migration, and indentured servitude.² At the same time, travel for travel's sake by diasporic writers seems to sit uneasily in the minds of some commentators. Pettinger reveals: '[T]he very *idea* that Black people might actually travel for the sake of it is hard for some to accept: "Are you visiting relatives?" "Do you work here?"'³

One of the disturbing implications here, of course, is that writers of the Black Atlantic will have conceptions of 'foreignness' thrust upon them wherever they go, including the domain of the casual tourist. The privilege of conferring foreignness upon others is not theirs, such an argument seems to suggest. It is in this framework, then, that I want to explore two short examples of transatlantic objectification by Caribbean writers, in order to unsettle notions of power and privilege, and to pave the way for the two chapters that follow, on Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* respectively. Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* (1983), which imagines an idealised transatlantic ethnic heritage, can be profitably read alongside Jamaica Kincaid's scathing essay attacking Caribbean tourism, *A Small Place* (1988).⁴ Here, the Caribbean – an Atlantic location that is neither American nor European but impacted upon by both – becomes a site of renewal (*Praisesong*) or disease (*A Small Place*), with the tourist implicated in both constructions.

Before examining these texts and their construction of exoticism, however, I want to unpick the image of the Caribbean as a tourist destination, one that is even (especially?) promulgated by its authorised tourist websites. That the tagline of the official tourist website to Antigua was, until recently, 'The Caribbean you've always imagined', should give us pause, in that it both acknowledges the artificial construction of an actual geographic site and somehow covers over this understanding.⁵ You – the tourist – are both subject and object of the advertising, which effectively erases the Antiguan resident.

'Come savour the many flavours of peaceful Antigua!' the Antigua online tourist guide demands. 'Immerse yourself in an exotic, amiable world at the heart of the Caribbean geographically, socially, culturally and spiritually.' In this reading, Antigua becomes 'a beach with an island in the middle': a tourist site *par excellence*. The brochure language continues: 'Its famed countless, silky beaches lapped by iridescent azure seas are cooled by lyric breezes.' Antigua is 'unspoilt', 'naturally charming', with a 'tradition of service' for 'selective visitors'. In short, it is paradise. At this point, it will come as no surprise

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that the visual sign of Antigua is a white woman lounging in a red bikini. *This* Antigua is a tourist's paradise: safe, clean, beautiful – white.⁶ It is an image begging to be deconstructed. Linked into the desire for elsewhere, it is nevertheless an elsewhere of replication, and one that asserts the primacy of economic advantage and normative whiteness. It is an image that Kincaid's essay seeks to disrupt, if not destroy.

In Alain de Botton's lyrical paean to travel, *The Art of Travel*, he offers a clear reading of the European desire for an 'exotic' island as he deconstructs a tourist brochure of Barbados, yet (unlike Kincaid below), he suggests, albeit comically, that those who are at risk are the tourists themselves:

Those responsible for the brochure had darkly intuited how easily their readers might be turned into prey by photographs whose power insulted the intelligence and contravened any notions of free will: over-exposed photographs of palm trees, clear skies and white beaches. Readers who would have been capable of scepticism and prudence in other areas of their lives reverted in contact with these elements to a primordial innocence and optimism. The longing provoked by the brochure was an example, at once touching and bathetic, of how projects (and even whole lives) might be influenced by the simplest and most unexamined images of happiness, of how a lengthy and ruinously expensive journey might be set in motion by nothing more than the sight of a photograph of a palm tree gently inclining in a tropical breeze.

I resolved to travel to the island of Barbados.⁷

The final, one line paragraph wittily sums up the seduction of travel: its promise of another way of being, its sense of freedom and abandonment. Indeed, this is its very pull – though as de Botton later notes, discovering ennui in Barbados, 'A momentous but until then overlooked fact was making its first appearance: that I had inadvertently brought myself with me to the island.'⁸ There is, therefore, no such thing as complete abandonment, and even a philosopher holds no claims to reading the transatlantic with objective eyes. De Botton's encounter with ennui is forcibly countered by Kincaid, who argues that the luxury of white ennui is responsible for destroying paradise. It is significant that de Botton's exploration of the Caribbean takes place not in his chapter 'On the Exotic' but in an earlier chapter, 'On Anticipation'. For the exotic, he explores Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, a site not often associated with the adjective. This very

unexpected use of the exotic offers an important counterpoint to the assumed location of the exotic, and what qualifies as such, and indeed, throughout the rest of this book, the exotic (linked to the foreign) continues to be explored in ways that unsettle and disrupt the alignment of the term with a specific kind of ethnicity.

Is this experience, as Pettinger and others above suggest, somehow different for diasporic writers? Paule Marshall's answer in *Praisesong for the Widow* suggests an unequivocal yes. Avey Johnson, the African-American widow of the title, experiences a similar ennui to de Botton while she is still on a Caribbean cruise ship named Bianca Pride, a cruise that is figured immediately as a retreat into whiteness. Avey's ennui has a different source from de Botton's: on board the ship (the sign of 'tourism with a vengeance' which, Paul Fussell argues, now stands in the place of real travel vessels),⁹ she actually misrecognises herself and sees herself as – she thinks – the white passengers see her. This view is so disturbing that she elects to leave the ship early.

Here, the Caribbean is a site that the Caribbean-American tourist first circles around, and then tries to leave. Indeed, Avey's tourist journey signifies, in Carole Boyce Davies's eyes:

a journey into the heart of whiteness, alienation, and separation. It is a frivolous journey which conveys only tourist status to Avey and symbolizes her middle class detachment and her immersion, achieved through her [late] husband's financial success, into Western, capitalist values and ethics.¹⁰

Davies's viewpoint seems, ironically, to accord with the potentially racist assumptions above, suggesting that travel for leisure is an inherently inappropriate pursuit for women like Avey, particularly within a Caribbean location. Yet *Praisesong for the Widow* is a call to home, to the country of origin, with the acknowledgement that for the Caribbean-American protagonist, this call is multiple and shifting. Avey is 'hailed' as Caribbean, an identity she at first refuses to recognise when approached by the islanders: "I'm afraid you've mistaken me for someone from around here, or from one of the other islands . . . who might know what you're talking about . . . I'm from the States. New York . . ." and she repeated it, "New York" (168, ellipses in original). Yet when she is asked by a Caribbean acquaintance to 'call her nation', she is not asked to identify with the US, but with her Caribbean and African ancestors. Avey's attempt to place

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herself, to relocate herself geographically, is complicated and incomplete.

As a tourist, Avey must insist upon and maintain distance; she is even faintly repulsed by the familiarity of the islanders, and recoils from their assumption of intimacy: '[F]rom the way they were acting she could have been simply one of them there on the wharf' (69). Avey's tourist persona is *shipped* from one island to another, but most of her vacation is spent inside; when Avey travels (off itinerary) on an excursion to Carriacou, in contrast, she does so upon a rickety sailboat which moves with and against the waves rather than cutting through them as the cruise ship did. Unsurprisingly, she is violently ill, but even this purging is metaphorically part of her journey: she must let go of what she has become (what she has incorporated into her being), in order to reclaim an earlier self.

Davies argues that for Avey to recover, she must 'make the reverse journey back into the heart of blackness',¹¹ and thus here, the transatlantic journey is an imaginary one. Her journey is not so much circular as spiral, in that she moves back into a recognition of her historical and ethnic past, one that embraces her African as well as her Caribbean heritage. This reverse journey, as many critics have commented, mimics the Middle Passage as well as, more optimistically, the flight of the Ibos.¹² According to legend, the Ibos simply walked away from South Carolina and slavery by treading across water to their homeland. The spiral nature of Avey's journey is apparent when she resolves to return to the site of the Ibo Landing, in Tatem, South Carolina, where she spent her youth. Avey thus moves, initially, from the US on a cruise ship which is trapped in a circular and regulated pattern; she detours to Grenada, hoping for a non-stop flight back home. But stop she does; and soon she is taking her second detour: to Carriacou. From here she moves into her past and reconnects with it, so that her proposed journey back home will lead, eventually, to a new home in the old ancestral spot of Tatem. Perhaps the most important lesson that she learns comes to her early: "Just because we live over this side don't mean we's from this place, you know" (163). In learning to 'call her nation', Avey learns to reconnect.

Lindsey Tucker argues that for African-American women writers, 'mobility remains potent as a metaphor that is always more collective than individual.'¹³ While Avey's journey is individual, it does resonate with the larger migrations – both enforced and chosen – that her Caribbean heritage implies. In this manifestation, the Caribbean is a *centrally* located transatlantic space, and one that offers renewal,

rejuvenation and connection. Here, the gendered tourist misreads her situation (she considers herself separate from the islanders) but is never, herself, misread. Rather, she comes to understand that readings of her as Caribbean are accurate readings, and her tourism therefore rejuvenates her not in the way that those critical of tourists suggest (rich, naïve people getting away from it all to a 'simpler' space) but in ways that connect her transnationally to others.

The site of this renewal, however real, is somewhat indistinct, Carriacou remaining 'more a mirage rather than an actual place. Something conjured up perhaps to satisfy a longing and need' (254). This formulation of mirage is important. In *Praisesong for the Widow*, Marshall uses real locations but sites them within the realm of the mythic and imaginary. Marshall's exploration of the Caribbean is thus a complex one, in that she both recognises and manipulates the images attached both to the land itself and to those who visit or live there.

As has already been noted, John Urry has famously argued that 'tourists are semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from various discourses of travel and tourism.'¹⁴ The discourse of travel, then, is marked by signs which are meant to be recognisable, which are meant to be read in ways that conform to and confirm the tourists' imagined location(s) – as indeed the tourist brochures above capitalise on with clear financial returns. Jamaica Kincaid turns this idea on its head in *A Small Place*, reading not the tourist location so much as the tourists themselves, as she attacks the tourist's leisured desire for the other and the exotic. If Marshall suggests an overarching beneficial connection between transatlantic spaces, Kincaid argues for the opposite. Her scathing attack on tourists offers a 'you people' address that forcibly others her imagined reading public: 'There must have been some good people among you, but they stayed home. And that is the point. That is why they are good. They stayed home' (35). Kincaid's extended essay – an angry memoir of resistance that links contemporary American tourism to British colonial rule – rereads paradise (Antigua) as a location of violent, historical encounters with lasting damage to this island space. If tourists, in escaping temporarily from their own lives, simply reflect back on themselves, they do not see this other location, which Kincaid's essay brings to the fore: a poor island, with no money to restore damaged buildings or build good quality schools and hospitals; an island with little rainfall.

Kincaid begins her attack with an innocuous line: 'If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see' (3), yet alongside this

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list of sights, she offers other sights, another reading, which reveal the exploitation of the tourist's stay. Most importantly, though, according to Kincaid, the tourist sees one thing:

You see yourself taking a walk on that beach, you see yourself meeting new people (only they are new in a very limited way, for they are people just like you). You see yourself eating some delicious, locally grown food. You see yourself, you see yourself . . . (13, ellipses in original)

Yet even in this seeing of yourself, you are mistaken, for, as Kincaid goes on to point out, 'A tourist is an ugly human being' (14). Kincaid's tourist is sometimes European, more likely American, and white (always white): the latest in a long line of people with colonial desires and misplaced superiority whose engagement with the contact zone leads to subjugation and destruction. *A Small Place* reveals the suspect political dimensions of an apparently innocent package tour, through which the tourist is both the logical extension of British colonial rule and American economic might. In this apparently innocent realm, the local 'tradition of service' is the logical extension of slavery. Native and tourist stand in entrenched opposition to each other; what defines them is power, or the lack of it.

Kincaid's strategy is the explicit othering of the descendants of those who have othered the Antiguan residents. She dismisses the tourist whilst recognising the tourist's damaging impact, and tries to prick the tourist's conscience at the same time: 'You needn't let that slightly funny feeling you have from time to time about exploitation, oppression, domination develop into full-fledged unease, discomfort; you could ruin your holiday' (10). Alison Donnell argues that the essay is 'a consummate work of ventriloquism which deploys a whole series of voices in order to debate the value and limitations of the cultural discourses and positions available to those interested in this small place and its people'.¹⁵

For Kincaid, the injunction against transatlantic encounters is absolute.¹⁶ Her readings of Antigua strategically alter its 'exotic' appeal. The essay refuses – whilst strategically using – the very desire for the exotic. After all, Kincaid herself employs the language of a glossy tourist brochure in the final chapter of the small book (though, to be sure, to different ends):

Antigua is beautiful. Antigua is too beautiful. Sometimes the beauty of it seems unreal. Sometimes the beauty of it seems as if it were stage sets for

a play, for no real sunset could look like that; no real seawater could strike that many shades of blue at once . . . no real day could be that sort of sunny and bright, making everything seem transparent and shallow; and no real night could be that sort of black, making everything seem thick and deep and bottomless. (77)

Yet Kincaid goes further than this; she doesn't allow the exotic beauty to speak for itself, but rather she reads over the beauty and acknowledges that

It is as if, then, the beauty – the beauty of the sea, the land, the air, the trees, the market, the people, the sounds they make – were a prison, and as if everything and everybody inside it were locked in and everything and everybody that was not inside it were locked out. (79)

The exotic here is an unacknowledged prison, the island's beauty used against itself, and (some of) the island's residents are complicit in this. It is this very complicity with exoticism that will be explored in the next two chapters, which move beyond the tourist to the traveller, that character who attempts a longer sojourn or indeed complete relocation. The 'exotic' is thus relocated to Denmark and to the heartland of the USA in these chapters, and exoticism becomes detached from place and associated with individuals.

NOTES

1. Alasdair Pettinger, 'Introduction', in *Always Elsewhere: Travels of the Black Atlantic* (London: Cassell, 1998), p. xvii.
2. Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 2.
3. Pettinger, *Always*, p. xiii, italics in original.
4. Paule Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (London: Virago, 1989). Originally published in 1983. Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (London: Vintage, 1997). Originally published in 1988. These texts will be cited parenthetically.
5. See <http://www.geographia.com/ANTIGUA-BARBUDA/press4.htm>; the website has been updated with a new 'brand': 'The beach is just the beginning.' See <http://www.antigua-barbuda.org/index.htm> (accessed 27 July 2007)
6. See <http://www.turq.com/antigua/> (accessed 27 July 2007); the original image of the white woman has subsequently been replaced by a photograph of a palm tree and one of a tourist looking out onto the waves;

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this tourist is in shadow, which does not highlight skin colour or ethnicity, but the figure is still 'read' as white.

7. Alain de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2002), pp. 8–9.
8. de Botton, *Art*, p. 20.
9. Paul Fussell, *Abroad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 41. Originally published in 1980.
10. Carole Boyce Davies, 'Black Woman's Journey into Self: A Womanist Reading of Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*', *Matatu: Journal for African Culture and Society* 1 (1)(1987): 22.
11. Davies, 'Black Woman', p. 23.
12. See, for example, G. Thomas Couser, 'Personal and Collective Memory in Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*', in Amritjit Singh et al. (eds), *Memory and Cultural Politics: New Approaches to American Ethnic Literatures* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1996), pp. 106–20, especially p. 111.
13. Lindsey Tucker, *Textual Escap(e)ades: Mobility, Maternity, and Textuality in Contemporary Fiction by Women* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), p. 11.
14. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 12–13. Originally published in 1990.
15. Alison Donnell, 'Writing for Resistance: Nationalism and Narratives of Liberation', in Joan Anim-Addo (ed.), *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing* (London: Whiting and Birch, 1996), p. 33.
16. Of course, Jamaica Kincaid herself famously lives outside of Antigua, having emigrated to the United States. She is thus here in the position of 'returning stranger' though the text doesn't explicitly comment on this, or on the fact that her own biography shows that she, too, left home.